



# MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **DHS KICKS OFF 2014 SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM APPLICATION CYCLE *SEEKS SPONSORS FOR UNDERSERVED AREAS***

**NASHVILLE, TN**—The Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS) announces the availability of funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for the 2014 Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). This federally funded program is intended to assure that children who rely on free and reduced price meals during the school year, have access to nutritious meals during the summer. DHS needs partners, especially in underserved areas, to help meet these needs. New sponsors and sites are invited to partner with this initiative.

Children age 18 and under are eligible to receive meals through the SFSP. In addition, a person 19 years of age and older who has a mental or physical disability and participates during the school year in a public or private non-profit school program, established for the disabled, is also eligible to receive meals.

Eligible sponsors include schools, private non-profit organizations, government entities, and non-profit residential camps. Sponsors are reimbursed on a per meal basis for meals served to eligible children and may sponsor the SFSP at one or more sites. In 2013, a total of 91 sponsors served over 4 million meals to children at 2,136 sites across Tennessee. Although many meals have been served, only 12.6% of eligible children have accessed the program.

“Over the past few years, partners in the SFSP have increased reach to children across the state and there is still the potential to benefit many more,” said DHS Commissioner Raquel Hatter. “We’re excited to work toward finding new community partners, while continuing to work with established sponsors and federal partners in assisting low income families and children have access to healthy meals during summer months.”

The deadline for new organizations to submit applications for sponsorship to the Tennessee Department of Human Services is at least 45 days prior to the anticipated start date of their program.

The criteria for the sponsorship are simple and straightforward, as outlined in the USDA Administrative Guidance for Sponsors Manual. Sponsoring organizations must agree to serve meals to all children in attendance regardless of their race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

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CITIZENS PLAZA, 15TH FLOOR  
400 DEADERICK STREET  
NASHVILLE, TN 37243  
615.313.4700

The Department of Human Services will be hosting SFSP workshops across the state to train new sponsors, refresh existing sponsors on program requirements and present new requirements on federal regulations.

If your organization is interested in sponsoring the SFSP in your community, or becoming a feeding site under an existing sponsor, please contact Carmen Gentry or Pamela Norton before April 15, 2014 at (615) 313-4749; or by e-mail at [Carmen.Gentry@tn.gov](mailto:Carmen.Gentry@tn.gov) or [Pamela.Norton@tn.gov](mailto:Pamela.Norton@tn.gov).

For more information on the Summer Food Service Program, please visit:  
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-food-service-program-sfsp> .

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